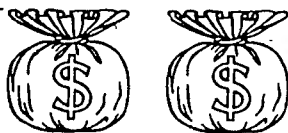


*Conservative Party (Sask.)*  
#11

ARCHIVES  
OF  
SASKATCHEWAN

# KINDERSLEY DAM



Hon. W. R. Motherwell  
"Deals the Cards"

## THE KINDERSLEY DAM

In the sordid annals of culpable extravagance and negligence with which the history of the Government of Saskatchewan teems during the twelve years it has been in office, it would be difficult to find a more typical example than the case of the Kindersley bridge and dam.

The history of the episode dates back to the year 1912. The town of Kindersley had for some time been anxious to secure a water supply, and had consulted Mr. Haddon, a distinguished engineer. Enter the Hon. W. R. Motherwell on the scene. It was election year, and the people of Humboldt, for which constituency the Minister of Agriculture was sitting, had begun to show a distinct coolness, if not antipathy, to their representative. Casting around for a new riding, where he was not so well known, Mr. Motherwell transferred his affections to Kindersley. He appeared suddenly on the horizon as a fairy godfather and immediately proceeded to show the people of his new constituency (who within a few months would be called upon to vote) how a water supply could be obtained without any great cost to themselves.

The courtship of the Hon. William began in the spring and by June Chairman McPherson and his corps of engineers had calculated that the cost of a combined bridge and dam—a dam to supply water to Kindersley and a bridge to give the Government an excuse for doing the work—would cost \$11,000. Of this amount it was suggested that the government should pay \$6,000 and the town \$5,000.

### Wholly Unwarranted, Says Highways Chairman

Chairman McPherson did not agree to the proposal without a protest. As an engineer, and the head of what was supposed to be an independent commission, he declared that he was "shocked when he first considered the proposition," and that "it was a work wholly unwarranted and unjustifiable." According to the evidence given before the Royal Commission he was of opinion that the Government could not legally undertake the work at all. For some reason he changed his mind.

But with an election in the offing it appeared to Mr. Motherwell that a paltry \$11,000 was not a very generous gift for his newly found friends, and the engineers "revised their computations," and finally arrived at a sum of \$20,000 for the new structure. It was then suggested that the Government and the town should each bear one half of the cost. Negotiations continued, and the elections were drawing nearer.

3. 11

The Hon. A. P. McNab is then added to the cast. On August 24th, he wires Mr. McPherson to go ahead with the building of the bridge and dam. It must not be forgotten that at this time negotiations between the town and the Government were still proceeding.

### Mr. Motherwell's Second Sight.

The next thing to do was to see that the contract was let to the right man—a most important matter in election construction. Very quietly and confidentially tenders were sought. No record of any advertisements for tenders can be found in the department files. In some apparently mysterious way the Parsons Engineering and Construction Company and Laidlaw Brothers found out that tenders would be acceptable. They tendered. Laidlaw's tender was dated September 7, yet on September 6 Hon. W. R. Motherwell was able to wire to Kindersley that the Parsons Company was the lowest tenderer. This was indeed second sight for it was not until September 11 that McPherson made his comparison between the only two tenders received.

Parsons price for the work was \$36,000, and Laidlaw's price was \$28,000, a difference in favor of Laidlaw of \$8,000, yet Motherwell proved a true prophet, for the Parsons Company got the job. Moreover although the contract price for the work was \$36,000, the Parsons Company actually got \$57,000 for the bridge and dam. How the advanced figure was arrived at forms interesting reading.

### Contract Prices Inflated.

In figuring up the Parsons tender it was found that "rip rap" had been fixed at \$2 per yard. "Rip rap" is simply rough stone laid along the soft bank to keep the soil from being undermined by water or otherwise. McPherson in his examination before the Commission said that the figure for rip rap in the Parsons tender must reasonably mean \$2 per cubic yard. There were 333 cubic yards of this rip rap estimated to be done on the job, but when the time for payment came the Parsons company asked for and received \$13,920 for 2,784 square yards or 928 cubic yards at \$15 per cubic yard. That is to say:

Estimated 333 cubic yards at \$2 a cubic yard ....\$ 666

Paid for 928 cubic yards at \$15 per cubic yard ..\$13,920

Miscalculation or net gain to the contractor .....\$13,254

And there is not an engineer or a contractor in Canada who does not know that \$15 per cubic yard for rip rap is an exorbitant and ridiculous price.

The quantities are also under the gravest suspicion. The engineer in charge did not or would not vouch for these figures nor

O.K. them, nor indeed did anyone outside of the Government offices, where it stands to reason no one had actual knowledge of the work done.

Meanwhile Kindersley continued the negotiations with regard to payment, and finally agreed to pay fifteen per cent. of the total cost. Up to the present Kindersley has not paid a single nickel towards the cost of construction.

To sum up the whole sordid story, Motherwell seeks a constituency. Makes an election promise. The Highways Commission admits it has no jurisdiction to build. McNab orders the work begun. Job is let to the highest tenderer. Motherwell pretends to know the lowest tender a day before this tender was signed.

First estimate of cost . . . . .	\$11,000
Second     "     "     . . . . .	\$20,000
Contract price of Parsons . . . . .	\$36,000
Actually paid to Parsons . . . . .	\$57,000
Total cost of bridge, labor and materials . . . .	\$62,804

**Bradshaw  
Papers**